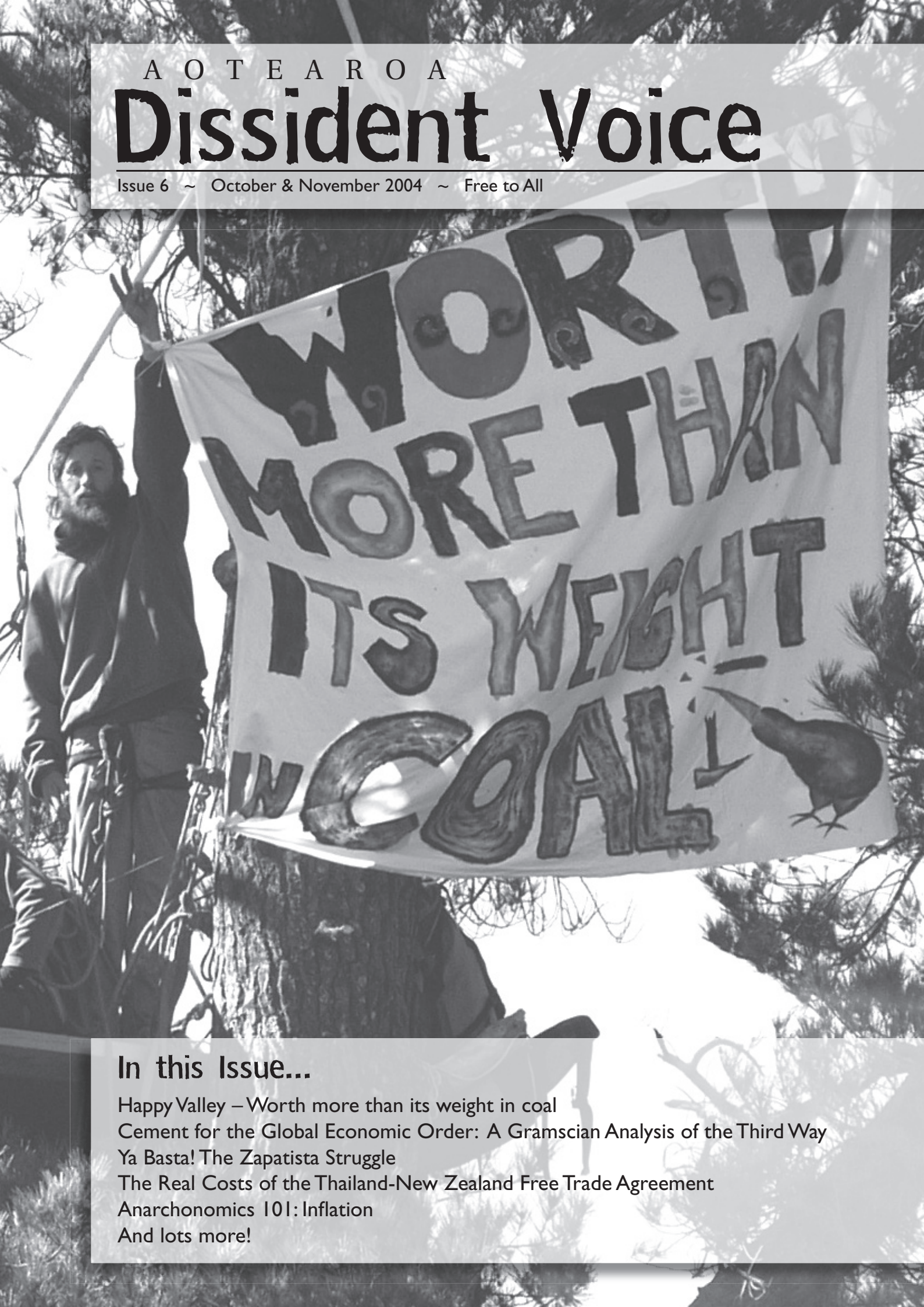


A O T E A R O A

Dissident Voice

Issue 6 ~ October & November 2004 ~ Free to All



In this Issue...

Happy Valley – Worth more than its weight in coal

Cement for the Global Economic Order: A Gramscian Analysis of the Third Way

Ya Basta! The Zapatista Struggle

The Real Costs of the Thailand-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement

Anarchonomics 101: Inflation

And lots more!

Greetings Dissident...

HELLO most beloved reader and welcome to the brand spanking new and improved 6th issue of Aotearoa's most unrespectable revolutionary rag.

As I'm sure you have noticed one or two things have changed around here since last issue. I'm new for one, my name's Matt and I'm privileged to say I've joined Torrance on the ed-collective. I'm an anarchist of the 'bourgeois individualist' tradition, I enjoy bubble-baths, peanut-butter, occasional alcoholism and looking at sandals. I'm an opinionated little fellow, and when Torrance offered me the chance to sow my seeds of wisdom throughout the lumpen masses, well, how could I refuse...

Anyway, chances are if you're on page one you already know that *imminent rebellion* has been re-branded as **Dissident Voice**. We decided that *imminent rebellion* was just too ambiguous, perhaps a little threatening, and a rather puzzling juxtaposition of words, and simply did not adequately convey the purpose of the 'zine.

Fundamentally, we aim to create a space for the free flow of anarchist/libertarian-left news, analysis and creativity and we want this 'zine to at least go some way in alleviating the dire poverty of flax-roots New Zealand independent media in the same spirit of such fine publications as Thrall and W((i))ndy.

While the 'zine remains run by anarchists, for anarchists and on anarchist principles, we don't want to alienate those people who while perhaps not defining themselves as anarchists

or revolutionaries (such as certain feminists, environmentalists, queer activists, Maori subversives etc) are still fighting the good fight, and may find the 'zine a useful resource in their struggles.

So we prefer to both have our cake and eat it too over here. We want the 'zine to stand as both a medium for communication and organisation, but also a source of alternative information which is useful and accessible to everybody. We think **Dissident Voice** is a snappy handle that communicates these various aims more accurately than *imminent rebellion*.

Which brings me to the moral of my story – write for **Dissident Voice**! We live and die by our volunteers over here. Biggie ups to our new columnists, Sam, Kieran and the Revolution Please posse, as well as all our other beautiful contributors, but we're always hungry for more talent.

Don't worry if you're really shit, we'll just laugh at you behind your back and make rude jokes about your mother to your face. There are many practical benefits of writing for **Dissident Voice** of course, dissident groupies and the such (you'll start emanating a powerful sexual aura of rebelliousness on publication), plus, if you're really good you could even get on the SIS watch list. Oh, and don't forget to put us on your CV!

It's all in the name of the glorious revolution comrades, so if you're semi-literate, and have an opinion on something from a left-libertarian/roots-radical perspective, then get in contact with us. Our website will shortly be updated every issue with news on the progress of the 'zine, suggestions on possible feature articles and vacant column spaces, so go check it out. Of course, we're always looking for cool images, art, poetry, prose and updates on all your wonderful projects.

So enjoy issue 6, and until next time... Adieu!

– Matthew Russell, Editorial Collective

Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church begotten weed, marriage? Free love? As if love is anything but free. Man has bought brains, but all the millions in the world have failed to buy love.

– Emma Goldman

A O T E A R O A Dissident Voice

Aotearoa Dissident Voice is one small part of a continuing subversive current, one which aims at the total and complete dissolution of all relationships, systems and institutions based on hierarchy, domination and exploitation. This current is one which seeks new ways of living with one another and our environment based on freedom, equality, cooperation and respect. It is fundamentally anarchist; and yet it is broader, including people from diverse yet interrelated movements: anti-capitalists, indigenous rights activists, feminists, environmentalists, animal liberationists, queer activists...

Aotearoa Dissident Voice seeks to provide a space where ideas and creativity can flow in relative autonomy from the silence imposed on us by Power, a space where we can connect, grow and start reclaiming our lives.

Submissions

We eagerly accept submissions on a broad range of topics, whether they are in the form of articles, poetry, rants, photos... If it's from an anarchist/left-libertarian perspective, it's in.

The deadline for the next issue is November the 15th.

Subscriptions

If you don't want to miss out on an issue of **Aotearoa Dissident Voice** then send us your mailing details and enough cash (cheques can be made out to 'Aotearoa Dissident Voice') to cover postage. \$10 will cover 5 issues in NZ.

Donations

The 'zine is free, and this project is funded from the pockets of the editors and from donations. If you want to give us a hand, donations in the form of cash (cheques made out to 'Aotearoa Dissident Voice') and stamps would go a long way!

Contact Details

Aotearoa Dissident Voice
PO Box 1913
Otautahi/Christchurch
Aotearoa/New Zealand

www.dissidentvoice.org.nz
edcollective@dissidentvoice.org.nz

ISSN: 1176 - 7456

Thugs & Theocrats

Are We Undergoing a Right-Wing Backlash?

THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE of conservative activism recently has seen more than a few key-boards around the country suffering under a frenzied attack of banged out polemics.

The concept of a right-wing backlash has been one of those handy concepts that 'trend journalism' trots out with every few years when they've not much else to do. Basically trend journalism works by extrapolating from a few examples of something to the claim that this something is a national or global trend. For example, if you can find three women who have quit their jobs to take care of children and keep a house, you can claim this is a social trend and use it to slam feminism. Effectively, it's a way for journalists to air their own prejudices with barely any facts for justification.

The left does it too. Check out most Marxist papers and you'll find lots of workers being quoted who reckon a red flag is the best thing since sliced bread, while the capitalist papers quote workers happily earning their bread who want the reds sliced or dead.

The current round of conservatism began with National party boss Don Brash embracing Maori-bashing in a desperate attempt to reinvigorate party support. Jumping on the climate created by centre-right politicians, the National Front re-emerged as it does every few years before collapsing in on itself – though this time it appears to be making a better go of it than usual.

Then the Christians got in on the act with the fundamentalist Destiny Church taking to the streets to protest the Civil Union Bill, which would create a state-recognised quasi-



marriage agreement, open to both homosexuals as well as hets.

Counter-protests opposing the Destiny Church, the church's decision to deck their followers out in black T-shirts, prompting the obvious comparisons with Mussolini and Moseley's followers, and the call by a few people for laws against the racist rhetoric of the National Front created a minor shit-storm, with the Dominion Post newspaper leading

the way with a mad article titled *Are Liberals Fascists?* (Dominion Post, August 28). The thesis of the article being that politically correct leftists were trying to destroy freedom of speech to prevent their opponents views being heard.

One would have thought that writing the oxymoronic (and plain moronic) sentence 'Are liberals fascists?' would have set 150 decibel alarms ringing deep in the bowels of even the most jaded of capitalist journalists, but apparently not. Depressingly, the ensuing letters to the editor confirmed that hardly anyone knew what either a fascist or a liberal was.

Roughly, a fascist is somebody who stands for a nationalist economy based on hierarchical corporate structures with a high degree of state intervention. A liberal is a person who supports a market-based capitalist economy with a low level of government intervention in society. The latter word isn't a synonym for leftist, and the former isn't a title to be thrown at anyone with authoritarian tendencies.

Incidentally, the Marxists aren't happy with this definition of fascist as it doesn't sound too different to the philosophies of people they rather fancy, they prefer to label fascism an event rather than a theory, a particular stage of capitalism where business interests request state support in crushing working class resistance. Ridiculous really, as this means that since they haven't gained power, the National Front aren't fascists, although the Labour Party might be.

Actually, the supposed right-wing backlash seems hard to detect. The National Front are a bunch of dangerous thugs, but seem to have little broad support and are basically scraping a movement out of the brooding losers that always exist amongst fringe dwellers. Not that many of them have fringes. A nasty phenomenon that needs to be rooted out, but not a sign of a shift in public attitudes.

The Destiny Church is a different thing again. Most of their followers are working class Maori from small towns who feel they are being ignored by the government and most other institutions. And they are dead right. In previous times, these people would have been seen as the natural province of the left. The left having abandoned these pastures for the greener fields of academia and capitalism, have also abandoned them to the theo-



crats. They are being scooped up by a bunch of dodgy capitalists who milk them for money in return for providing a sense of community and a feeling of purpose. They are being sold a package of values that poses as support for the family and for the community, but which has added god, sexism, homophobia into to the mix.

Interestingly, the focus of the church's speakers at the Wellington demo in August was on creating a decent future for children. There wasn't much anti-gay rhetoric at all. The capitalist media made much of the confrontation with counter-protestors, but apart from a small minority of violent churchgoers and a few idiots among the opposition – such as the guy with the 'Tamaki is Hitler' placard, everything was pretty reasonable. After a few minutes of ritualised chanting at each other, both sides stood around together and intermingled without any particular problems. Even the four clowns from the National Front just stood around with placards looking nervous and miserable. As many on the counter-protest noted, quite a few of the Destiny Church crowd probably marched beside them on the foreshore hikoi a few months earlier.

While the violence of the National Front makes them an obvious, if relatively minor, threat, the rise of the Destiny Church is more of a wake-up call for anarchists. If we can't reach people like these, we aren't doing our job. We suffer from a lack of numbers and resources, but we can't put a large chunk of New Zealand into the 'too hard' basket. We've got to get out of the leftist ghetto, spend less energy working in arenas we happen to find personally comfortable and talk more and louder or we might as well give up, lie back and enjoy the sunshine.

– Sam Buchanan

ABA and the Bypass Monster

ANTI-BYPASS ACTION (ABA) is preparing to meet the Wellington City Council, Transit and Fulton Hogan head-on over the next couple of months as the Inner-City Bypass is scheduled to begin construction. The direct-action group has been stockpiling equipment and doing reconnaissance of the area the bypass is scheduled to plough through in order to halt the demolition of Wellington's creative centre.

The bypass is a scaled down version of the 1963 proposal for the Foothills Motorway, a 6 lane motorway that was intended to contend with predicted traffic volumes (read smoggy, stinky cars and trucks) for 1981. The Bypass proposal was first mooted in 1980 and is a third the size of the 1963 motorway. How it is meant to contend with today's traffic volumes, let alone 1981's seems to have been conveniently forgotten.

The 1963 plan was also based on a manual called "Road User Benefit Analysis for Highway Improvements" that was adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials in 1960 and seen as a useful guide to our own roading woes. Why we would want to mimic the American model of road development is unknown to this author but from this we can see that the original plans for this road were fundamentally flawed and continue to be to this day.

The Bypass will be a two-lane feeder, which essentially means it will be just like any other road and all to save an estimated 0.7-1.8 minutes on your journey across town. Whoopty fuckin doo!!! Did I mention there will be traffic lights too!!!

And if you don't need to use the Bypass, what benefits can you expect to gain? Well essentially none as delays are expected to increase on other journeys around town. Tranfund's (the elites who decide which road to build where and when) own studies have shown that this road is expected to reach capacity in just 2-3 years and then we'll be back

where we started.

The real reason the Wellington City Council and Transit are so eager to build this road is that they can then hope to decrease traffic around the waterfront and then see the value of the land in that area increase (and you'll never guess who can afford the land around the waterfront). Never mind that the heritage of Te Aro could make a contribution to Wellington City. Rather 18 of the current buildings will be relocated (including the Freedom Shop) and 38 will be destroyed. Indeed this bastion of working class housing must be a needle in the eye of the local capitalists, reminding them of those they have exploited over the years to achieve their wealth.

Many groups have come and gone over the years who have voiced opposition to the Bypass and its various incarnations but the Wellington City Council has managed to wait them all out. The next series of evictions are to be on October 1st and construction is expected to begin soon after that in order to avoid the upcoming elections which could delay the project for another couple of years.



2003 May Day Celebrations outside the Freedom Shop which is set to be demolished if the bypass goes ahead.

The reformist politics of those around us are starting to falter; indeed some are starting to see the Bypass as inevitable, as progress, as beneficial. We at ABA say no to car culture and say yes to sustainable communities based on local people making decisions for themselves. We will defend Te Aro from the Bypass monster and look to transform the community that the current landlords at Transit have allowed to waste away, into a sustainable, vibrant, creative district whose residence can affect their lives in ways they best see fit.

— ABA

In order for the campaign against the 'bypass' to be successful, we will need help from those outside of Wellington. Anti-Bypass Action is looking for keen urban guerrillas who would like to take a holiday in Wellington while disrupting the Te Aro Motorway extension/'Bypass' project.

The tender for construction has been awarded to Fulton Hogan but nobody knows when demolition and construction will begin, except that it will definitely be before Christmas.

You will be into occupying buildings on the bypass route and engaging in other creative and direct actions. We are looking for people who would not be inconvenienced by being trespassed from the bypass route.

We can put you up and give you a guided tour of sites of interest. Contact aba@enzyme.org.nz if you're interested.

Camp Crusty - 'a cheap holiday in the country'

CAMP CRUSTY is a gathering of anarchist/anti-authoritarian identifying parent(s), caregivers, friends etc. and their kids (of course!).

Camp Crusty is not a conference about children... it's for the children!

For sure opportunities for networking and discussing issues will be available (in fact offers of workshops are already coming in...), but primarily this will be a 'cheap holiday in the country' for our children to run wild and make new friends.

Camp Crusty will be held from 7 - 9 January 2005 - that's the first weekend after NY,

so hopefully working parents can stretch their holidays to include it.

If you're thinking 'shit, all that way for a weekend...' then come earlier or stay later and make it a real holiday; you're more than welcome!

Camp Crusty will be happening at Marama-iti on the Whanganui River. We have a safe, fun environment and are close to a safe beach.

Exact details (like fundraising for a bouncy castle...) are still being worked out. Please get in touch if you would like to come

along to lax out (with or without children), have skills to offer or would like to come up earlier to help with prep work etc.

Our email is saskiamarama@hotmail.com and there is an email loop happening. Updates will also be posted on www.anarchism.org.nz.

The original proposal is posted on that web site and people are still welcome to forward it onto people they think may be interested in coming along.

— Geoff, Marama-iti

@ Gathering

not another bullshit talkfest



THE @ Gathering originally slated for Labour weekend this year has been pushed back to Guy Fawkes weekend to avoid a clash with the multicultural march in Wellington. The anarchist gathering taking place in Christchurch is now set for the weekend of the 6th & 7th of November and looks like it's gonna be a lot of fun!

Workshops are planned throughout the two days, with food provided, and entertain-

ment planned for Saturday night. A 'Reclaim the Night' march is also in the works.

Workshop topics include an intro to anarchism, sexism in the movement, setting up an infoshop, eco-anarchism, Tino Rangatiratanga, and lots more! Plus there are several 'open spaces' available for more spontaneous workshops or discussions.

There are several friendly flats around the city that have been dedicated to be used

for accommodation for people coming into Christchurch. There'll also be lots of space to put up tents.

Children are most welcome to come along, and childcare will be provided – just give us a heads up before the weekend!

The venue is still to be confirmed due to the change of date but will be settled very shortly (and probably by the time this goes to print). We've set up a website at <http://a-gathering.anarchism.org.nz> which will be kept up to date with all the latest details or alternatively give *Demozone*, the local activist centre, a call on (03) 366 7247.

We hope everyone can make it – see you all there!

Christchurch Food Not Bombs in Full Swing

A SMALL dedicated group have been busy on the streets of Christchurch highlighting the wastage of wars and capitalism in several Food Not Bombs stalls.

Food and literature has been given out to the public free of charge on several occasions. Nearly all the food used for the Food Not Bombs has come from dumpsters as well as a couple of small sympathetic eco-businesses. The events so far have been heaps of fun and very successful with most of the food gone within a couple of hours.

The next Food Not Bombs will target McDonalds on McDonalds day on the 16th of October, in Cashel Mall, Christchurch. This day/action is going to be really exciting as the group hopes to provide some entertainment as well. See you there!

The Food Not Bombs group is a small open group that welcomes new people at any time. We are contactable on (03) 366 7247 if you want more info or want to help out.

No Confiscation! No Privatisation!

He karanga tenei! Nau mai! Haere mai! Tautoko mai!

A MARCH and rally has been planned for Auckland on October the 16th to protest the government's continued opposition to Maori rights to the foreshore and seabed.

Hikoi organiser Annette Sykes says "The select committee hearings on the foreshore bill were a farce. The Maori voice has been blocked as only 10% of the 4,000 submissions were heard."

"Hapu up and down the country have now seen first hand that the government is not listening."

"Auckland has the largest gathering of Pacific peoples in the world and we call on them, our Pacific whanau, and all peoples of Aotearoa / New Zealand to join Maori in the Hikoi."

"As we would support their rights to resources in their nations, we ask that they join Maori as we Hikoi to ensure our rights are upheld," said Ms Sykes. "The partnership between Maori and our Pacific whanau is a powerful statement about our collective indigenous rights."

"The Foreshore Hikoi is for all New Zealanders. It's about justice for all."

The Hikoi will be preceded by rallies at the final select committee hearings in Auckland on September 27-29. The fight is not yet over.



ASSEMBLE: Mayoral Drive Auckland Saturday 16th October. Hikoi commences 10 am

ROUTE: The hikoi will leave Mayoral Drive in Auckland City at 10 am and will proceed down Queen St, along Tamaki Drive (escort by waka taua) to the whakataua by Ngati Whatua at Orakei Domain (Bastion Point), Okahu Bay.

Parking at Bastion Point. Shuttle service for drivers back to Mayoral Drive.

Buses will be available for Kaumatua from the bottom of Queen Street to Bastion Point.

Hikoi representatives have met with Ngati Whatua, Police and City Council representatives to finalise logistical arrangements for the Hikoi.

<http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/hikoi2.htm>

Anti-Racism March Planned



THE NATIONAL FRONT, a violently racist and fascist group, plans to hold an anti-Asian rally at Parliament this Labour weekend. Opponents of racism will march against the National Front on the same day.

In the past few months in Wellington National Front members have been linked to attacks on Jewish cemeteries, Somali refugees, Maori, activists, and community centres, and have abused Chinese people outside the Chinese Embassy. They are now openly targeting and intimidating Asian businesses in Christchurch.

Wellington opponents of the National Front are planning for a peaceful and positive march for diversity and racial harmony in New Zealand.

The anti-racism march will start from the courtyard of Te Papa (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa) at midday, Saturday 23 October.

The march is to celebrate New Zealand's multicultural society, and wants Wellington to be free from fear and discrimination. A large public meeting in August agreed on three points that supported these goals:

- Stop the National Front
- Oppose humiliating immigration policies
- Stop Maori-bashing

– Aotearoa Indymedia

¡Ya Basta!

The Zapatista Struggle

IT IS THE 12th of October, 1992, 500 years since Columbus 'discovered' the Americas. It has been 500 years of war, slavery, starvation and death. In San Cristóbal, capital of the poorest Mexican state, Chiapas, the statue of Diego de Mazariegos, the 'Conqueror of Chiapas', has been torn from its pedestal and lies on the ground burning. A contingent of ski-masked *campesinos* (farmers) have disappeared into the jungle just as quickly as they appeared. And so the Zapatistas, largely unnoticed, made their first public appearance.

Their second appearance wasn't quite so subtle.

On New Years Day 1994, in response to The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) passing into state legislation, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) seized seven municipal seats in South-Eastern Chiapas. Mexicans awoke to see the Zapatistas' red and black flag flying over the court at San Cristóbal surrounded by armed Indians in rubber boots, ski masks and palacates.

"We didn't go to San Cristóbal to die, but we thought that if we did we would at least be noticed," Marcos would later explain.

While the EZLN described NAFTA as a "death sentence" for the Indians, in many ways the coinciding of the uprising with NAFTA was symbolic; the problems are far deeper.

"We are the product of 500 years of struggle", stated their declaration of war. "They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food or education... There is no peace or justice for ourselves and our children. But today we say ¡Ya Basta! (enough!)" (CCRI, January 1994)

500 Years of Struggle

The genocide of the indigenous American population is well known. In Mexico alone, 27 million people were obliterated in the 50

years following the arrival of Columbus from a combination of introduced diseases (used deliberately in many cases), warfare, slavery, scorched earth policies and the accompanying destruction of subsistence agriculture and food stocks.

Those that survived this onslaught were subjected to widespread exploitation, oppression and suffering to advance an economic agenda that has changed little in 500 years.

"Since colonial times, the Indian peoples of Mexico have suffered under conditions of extreme poverty. Despite having been the social class which contributed the most in the fight for independence, in the wars of resistance against North American and French invaders, and in the Mexican Revolution (and, if you'll allow me, in the current democratisation of the country - even though it's the politicians and media who fight for the "limelight"), the nation's debts to them have just kept piling up." – Marcos, August 2004

It is from Mexican Revolution of 1910-1921 that the Zapatistas take their name. Fighting to break the hacienda system (similar to the feudal system), Emiliano Zapata, a peasant himself, organised a guerrilla force of about 5,000 poor peasants. By the time Emiliano was betrayed and killed by government agents in 1919 the peasants had forced the creation of a constitution along with several important land reforms. The revolution itself, however, was lost and Mexico would fall into a single party dictatorship under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that would last for 71 years.

The Seed is Sown

The Zapatista story itself begins in 1983 when twelve wannabe revolutionaries, just out of university, full of enthusiasm and with fixed ideas of change, headed for the Lacandón

jungle in Chiapas, one of the poorest yet most resource-rich states in Mexico. Land reforms from the 1950s had opened up the Lacandón jungle to landless Indians of the South and it was here that thousands of the poorest farmers had poured into the jungle to set up *ejidos*, or communally owned agricultural tracts of land.

The 'revolutionaries' set out to organise the oppressed population "to rise up in armed struggle" but were very quickly taught a thing or two.

Mandar obedeciendo is a principle that exists throughout Mexican indigenous culture and means to rule by obeying the will of the people. Unlike in Western democracies where this idea is flagrantly ignored, these indigenous communities actively enforce the idea and the "authorities" do nothing more than follow through with consensus decisions made by community assemblies. This lesson in direct democracy was merely the first of many that would challenge the Marxist baggage that the "revolutionaries" entered with.

A unique interplay of ideas followed; the twelve began to learn the real meaning of struggle from the Indians while at the same time the Indians were inspired to begin building an army.

The Advent of Neo-Liberalism

Meanwhile, Mexico advanced its economic agenda of the past 500 years still further.

In August 1982 Mexico plunged into a debt crisis after its announcement that it could not meet debt repayments. It was subsequently forced into massive neo-liberal restructuring and widespread privatisation that according to the world press boosted its economy out of depression. Its transformation was sold as one of the success stories of the neo-liberal market-oriented policies that had gained such a hold throughout the world in the 1980s.

For the vast majority of the Mexican population however, the breach between rhetoric and reality was painfully evident.

Following the economic changes of the 1980s the number of people living in extreme poverty in rural areas increased by almost a third. Half the total population lacked resources to meet basic needs. Agricultural production was shifted to export and animal feeds, benefiting agribusiness, foreign consumers, and affluent sectors in Mexico while malnutrition became a major health problem. Agricultural employment declined, productive lands were abandoned, and Mexico began to import massive amounts of food. Real wages in manufacturing fell sharply. Labour's share in gross domestic product, which had risen until the mid- 1970s, declined by well over a third.

In 1991 Article 27 of the Mexican constitution, one of the key reforms governing land reform to come from the failed Mexican revolution, was amended. The mutilation threatened the survival of the *ejidos* of the

Lacandón jungle by allowing for transnational agribusiness “to buy, rent, or enter into association” with the Indian communities, previously protected from any sale or fragmentation of communal landholdings under the original law. More and more communities would declare *¡Ya Basta!* and join with the EZLN.

These changes were aimed at preparing Mexico for a free trade agreement with the U.S., a conscious effort on the part of both the Mexican state and Washington. Throughout 1993 the details were negotiated but to many Mexicans it was clear what the deal really meant: Mexico was to become a virtual fiefdom of the U.S. NAFTA was signed in late 1993 and was to be enacted on New Years day, 1994.

The War Against Oblivion

It was this final attack on the Mexican population that led to the Zapatistas to deliver their declaration of war on the *mal gobierno* (bad government) and make their almost entirely peaceful advance on various areas within Chiapas. Eleven years after they had first been formed the Zapatistas had become a force comprised of a large network of Indian communities from within the Lacandón jungle and beyond.

Even as night fell on January the 1st, 1994, the Mexican army was mobilised and sent into Chiapas to recapture those areas held by the EZLN. Fully aware that they were no match for a Mexican army armed to the teeth courtesy of U.S. ‘aid’, the EZLN prepared its retreat.

By January the 4th San Cristobal was empty, the Zapatistas were streaming back to their base areas and the government offensive was underway; 15,000 troops poured into Chiapas, columns of tanks, armoured vehicles and jet fighters patrolled the area and large tracts of land were being bombed.

When President Salinas declared a cease-fire on the 12th it was obvious this was a mere formality. The invaded municipalities were now all firmly back in the hands of the Armed Forces, and Salinas’ chief concern was to give the appearance of a country firmly under State control. This control had cost 159 lives: 48 Zapatistas, 54 government and military personnel, 67 civilians and a number of bodies remaining unidentified.

Civil Society Rises Up

As the Mexican army was settling in an army of another sort was arriving on the scene. “Civil society”, a term used by Marcos to describe a rather broad alliance of campesino organisations, union sections, ultra-left students, anarchists, socialists, peaceniks and intellectuals, was amassing in Mexico city shouting and chanting “Stop the Massacre” and “Murderers” at government officials. Already, people within the crowd had donned the trademark ski masks in

solidarity with the Zapatistas.

Whether in mass demonstrations in Mexico City or in peace camps observing the army in Chiapas, it was civil society that would time and again stand in defence of the Zapatistas and Mexican Indians. And it was in this atmosphere that a long, drawn out dialogue between the Zapatistas, the *mal gobierno*, and civil society began.

After a series of attempts to get the EZLN to surrender by offering useless compromises, and an attempt to capture the EZLN leaders, the Mexican government sat down properly to discuss the Zapatista demands in mid-1995, mediated by civil society and in particular the bishop of San Cristóbal, Samuel Ruiz. While the government negotiators repeatedly refused to negotiate properly and eventually ignored the final signed agreements, known as the San Andrés accords, the negotiations did prove to win support for the Zapatista cause from large sections of Mexican society, despite slander campaigns by the President.

Even while these negotiations were taking place the Zapatistas were going to great lengths to connect and work with civil society. From as early as mid-1994 conventions were organised in Chiapas where thousands poured past army checkpoints to create organisations that would help the Zapatistas and Mexico’s Indian population in general. In addition, massive consultas were organised among all Mexicans (at home and abroad) that, while officially aimed at seeking a mandate from the Mexican people, were used to highlight the demands of the EZLN.

A New Political Practice

From the moment the Zapatistas entered the world stage it was clear that they were different.

The image of an armed rebel movement in a period when such movements were meant to have recognised their own redundancy was startling and demonstrated that history was not yet over.

Since then most of the continued support the Zapatistas have received is strongly based on the idea that the Zapatistas are different. Different not just from the neo-liberal world order they oppose but, more

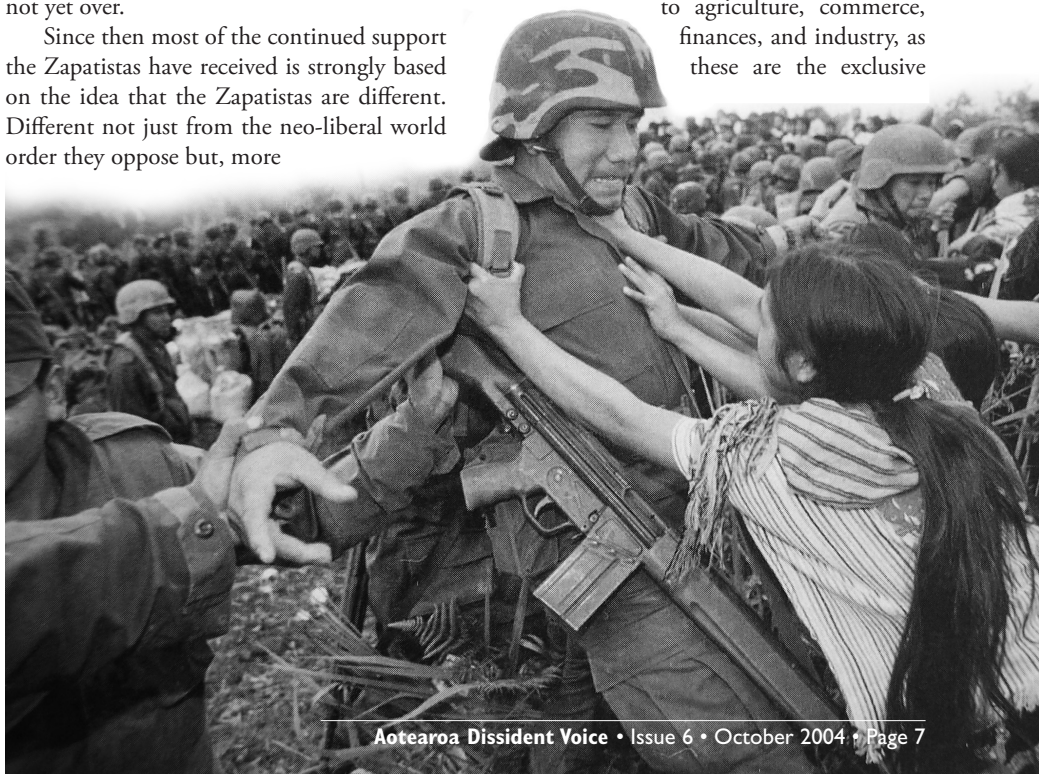
fundamentally, different from the armed revolutionary groups that exist and have existed elsewhere in the world; the Zapatistas seek change but not Power.

“It is not our arms which make us radical; it is the new political practice which we propose and in which we are immersed with thousands of men and women in Mexico and the world: the construction of a political practice which does not seek the taking of power but the organization of society. Intellectuals and political leadership, of all sizes, of the ultraright, of the right, the centre, of the left and the ultraleft, national and international criticize our proposal. We are so radical that we do not fit in the parameters of “modern political science”. We are not bragging ... we are pointing out the facts. Is there anything more radical than to propose to change the world? You know this because you share this dream with us, and because, though the truth be repeated, we dream it together.” – Marcos, 1995

Differing from many movements of the past, the Zapatistas neither wish to capture state power through force nor through ‘democratic’ elections. Instead, they seek change by opening up spaces for “civil society” to freely and democratically organise themselves and in doing so have transcended the traditional Power paradigm that has haunted most social movements of the past.

In the *Mexican Awakener*, issued during the 1994 rebellion, sentiments such as this are found throughout: “Advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated area the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities.”

Similarly, it was recognized that the people had the right to “demand that the revolutionary armed forces not intervene in matters of civil order or the disposition of capital relating to agriculture, commerce, finances, and industry, as these are the exclusive



domain of the civil authorities, elected freely and democratically”.

The structure of the EZLN ensured that these statements were more than just rhetoric; the principle of *mandar obedeciendo* persists throughout. While it is structured as a regular hierarchical army, the EZLN differs from most in that its command is composed of delegates from all the communities it encompasses, and it is in this way that it is controlled from the bottom up by the local communities themselves.

A further insurance against the downfalls of most regular armies is that those who are part of the EZLN are not professional full-time soldiers and thus they do not become alienated from the communities they are supposed to be defending. Most of the year those who fight are bent over in the fields and it is somewhat telling that all the EZLN offensives so far have come *after* the harvest has been collected.

The Zapatistas are so acutely aware of the pitfalls of hierarchical armies that almost all those higher up wear ski masks to conceal their faces not just to hide their identity from the Mexican government but more so to stop the rise to prominence of any one person in the army.

For those with an eye to history it will be immediately clear the similarities between the Zapatistas own revolutionary ethic and that of another revolutionary army that existed during the Russian revolution of 1917: the Makhnovshchina. The Ukrainian anarchists formed an army led by 20-year-old peasant Nestor Makhno shortly after the Bolsheviks sacrificed the whole of the Ukraine to the Austro-German empire in an effort to stave off imminent attack. They would spend the next four years fighting the Whites (bourgeois nationalists), the Reds (the Bolsheviks) and to a lesser degree the Austro-German empire itself.

The Makhnovshchina organised in a similar fashion as the Zapatistas: the army itself was regular and hierarchical but was always accountable to the local communities and on more than one occasion over-zealous officers were brought before communities and discharged. Their aims too were similar: to allow the people within the areas they occupied complete and total autonomy in their social organisation, their motto being to “do no more than give aid and council... In no circumstances can they, nor do they wish to govern”.

Our Word is our Weapon

Also unique to the Zapatistas is their incredible use of media, overwhelmingly in written form. Throughout this article so far there have been quotes from communiqués, declarations, letters to Mexican and global newspapers



and quotes from conversations with various Zapatistas. It is this communication that has maintained the critical ties with the outside – with other Indians, with Mexicans and dissidents around the world – that has allowed others to understand and support their struggle.

The principal and most prolific writer from the Zapatistas is the now famous Subcomandante Marcos. One of the original twelve, Marcos was given the job of being the mouthpiece of the general command of the EZLN, primarily due to his ability to understand the many indigenous languages spoken in Mexico and his obvious poetic ability with Spanish.

Since their first appearance Marcos has lamented the history of the Indians, delivered scathing attacks on the government, expressed the demands and desires of the Indian people, recounted oral stories and legends, and has even written comic tales of his pet beetle Don Durito.

“It is the word that gives form to that walk that goes on inside us. It is the word that is the bridge to cross to the other side. Silence is what Power offers our pain in order to make us small. When we are silenced we remain very much alone. Speaking, we heal the pain. Speaking, we accompany one another. Power used the word to impose his empire of silence. We use the word to renew ourselves.” – CCRI, October 1995

It is their ability to communicate their ideas, ideas which seek to transcend the traditional Power paradigm, that has seen the cause of the Zapatistas resonate throughout the world. Whether it is ski-masked anarchists on the streets of Seattle or solidarity protests during free trade talks in Europe, the Zapatista

message has reached and inspired an entirely new generation of radicals.

Power Still Betrays

In 2000 the PRI lost power of the Mexican state for the first time in 71 years, the longest any party has ever maintained power continuously anywhere in the world. With the overthrow of the PRI, and its replacement by the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), a party that had been sympathetic to the Zapatistas, things seemed to be looking up.

And yet a year later the Zapatistas were compelled to march to Mexico City demanding that the new government comply with the San Andrés accords, signed five years ago. Over a month long march from their home in the Lacandón jungle to Mexico City culminated in more than 250,000 people gathering to greet them as they entered the *Zócalo* (central plaza).

In an effort to appease the Indians the new President, Vicente Fox, pushed through reforms to allow the implementation of the San Andrés accords but secretly attached a commentary to congress instructing them to ensure that the accords would be gutted of any substantial change to the dominant order.

Today, 70% of Mexico’s population lives below the poverty line, 40 million live in extreme poverty. This is, of course, in keeping with the timeless tradition of systemic racism upon which the Mexican state was born; 81% of the indigenous population of Mexico lives below the poverty line, compared to just 18% of the non-indigenous population.

And so in Chiapas, the poorest Mexican state, the struggle continues 10 years on since the Zapatistas stormed onto the stage, and now 512 years since the conquest of an entire people.

“More than 500 years of exploitation and persecution have not been able to exterminate us. We have resisted since that time because history has been made with our blood. ... Today, the conquerors continue to persecute the indigenous who are rebellious. Today, the modern invaders of our lands live in the supreme government. They pursue the indigenous people, who cover themselves with the flag of the red five-pointed star, the flag of the Zapatista National Liberation Army. But they pursue not only the Zapatistas: death decreed by Power pursues all the indigenous of Mexico, including those with fair skin. Today, more than 500 years on, we are still here. Today, we say we are indigenous and we say it like giants. Today, we live...” – CCRI, October 1995

– Torrance

The Real Costs of the Thailand–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement

NEW ZEALAND is currently negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA) with Thailand. However, there has been little public debate on the issue. Our Trade Negotiations Minister, Jim Sutton, Fonterra and big business lobby groups, such as the Trade Liberalisation Network, all tell us that free trade is irresistible. We're told about the benefits the Thai free trade agreement will give our economy but we're not told about the social costs the FTA will have.

A FTA with New Zealand could have some very serious consequences for Thailand's 60,000 dairy farmers. Thousands of them took to the streets to protest against the Australia/Thailand FTA, which was signed last month. Thai farmers are now moving their opposition to the proposed FTA with New Zealand.

Currently Thai farmers meet 44% of the local demand for milk and milk products. Both New Zealand and Australia have a huge comparative advantage in dairy production. Thai dairy farming on the other hand is on a smaller scale and community based. Currently Thailand has a tariff of 51% on dairy imports.

An information paper released by the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in December 2003 stated that a key objective for New Zealand would be the elimination of all Thailand's tariffs and other non-tariff barriers to New Zealand goods and services. Fonterra would be able to export dairy products at a price Thai farmers would find impossible to compete with.



Sripai Nonsee at a Christchurch forum in September. An ex-factory worker for Nike, Sripai would produce apparel that sells for up to NZ\$3,000 for less than \$6 a day.

Thai farmers put out of work because of cheap dairy imports from NZ and Australia would then be forced to move into the cities to find work, where they would be easily exploited. In Thai cities mass areas of factories, known as Export Processing Zones or EPZs, exist where multinational corporations receive preferential treatment, such as tax breaks, for operating. EPZs are notorious for containing

factories where workers work in sweatshop conditions. Multinationals, such as Nike, set up in these areas in order to save on labour costs.

The New Zealand FTA, coupled with the Australian version, have the potential to decimate rural communities in Thailand. These sentiments were echoed by the President of the Cattle Farmers' Association of Thailand, Sunthorn Nikhomrat, in the weeks prior to the signing of the Australia/Thai FTA. "The potential impact isn't just going to hit dairy and cattle farmers, but the entire food chain, including feed producers". Nikhomrat dismissed assertions that the FTA would lower prices for consumers by saying "You can't assume that you will be able to eat cheap food imports forever".

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions reported in 2003 that "Child labour, forced labour, trade union rights violations and gender discrimination are still prevalent in Thailand". The minimum wage is just \$6-\$7 a day, hardly a living wage in Thailand so workers must work many jobs or a lot of overtime. The average working week for workers in the manufacturing sector is 50 hours a week.

Under the FTA New Zealand would also drop all its tariffs on Thai clothing and footwear imports. Such a move would be a huge threat to manufacturing jobs in New Zealand as firms outsource their work to Thailand to take advantage of cheap sweatshop labour. During the 1990's at least 10,000 textile, clothing and footwear jobs were lost as a result of tariff cuts, according to the Apparel and Textile Federation. Manufacturing closures have had a profound effect on many New Zealand towns.

Some, such as Suse Reynolds of The Trade Liberalisation Network, believe FTAs will help end sweatshop labour and the repression of unions in countries such as Thailand. This is simply not true. The governments of these nations want to keep the practices in place because they encourage foreign firms to set up business in order to cut costs. That is why EPZs have been set up.

The rural urban drift and sweatshop exploitation described in this piece has already happened in other countries that have signed FTAs. In Mexico thousands of Mexican farmers flooded into the cities to find work after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into place in 1994. They could no



Protests in Thailand against the WTO and the US FTA.

longer compete with cheap American food imports. The increased amount of available labour in the cities meant that wages decreased and many American firms outsourced their production to Mexico. Communities in both nations were destroyed as a result.

In September Dr Jakkrit Kuanpoth, an Associate Professor of Law at Thammasat Open University and Sripai Nonsee, a labour organiser and ex-factory worker from Thailand visited New Zealand on a speaking tour on how the Thai FTA is bad for the people of both New Zealand and Thailand. Ms Nonsee worked in sweatshop conditions making Nike, GAP and Addidas apparel for western consumers at a factory owned by Par Garments. During their overtime workers were locked inside the factory and not even allowed to visit the toilet. Supervisors would sexually abuse workers. At age 20 Ms Nonsee became the president of her factory's union. When she tried organising a union at another Par Garments factory she was fired.

Free trade proponents, such as the Trade Liberalisation Network, the Business Roundtable and our own Trade Minister Jim Sutton, claim free trade agreements will help sweatshop workers. Try telling that to Ms Nonsee!

The Thai/NZ FTA will only benefit a small elite in both New Zealand and Thailand. Multinational corporations will make huge profits at the expense of workers and small farmers. New Zealanders must ask themselves is the price of free trade really worth paying?

– Cam



Happy Valley

Worth more than its weight in coal

THE FIRST WEEK of September this year saw Happy Valley occupied for the second time in 5 months. Up to 45 people participated in a week on the West Coast to organise actions and discuss the 'Save Happy Valley' campaign further.

Happy Valley is threatened by Solid Energy's proposed Cyprus opencast mine. Happy Valley lies about 20km North of Westport and just West of Solid Energy's current Stockton mine which takes from the Earth more than 2 million tonnes of coal a year.

The proposed Cyprus mine, which would eventually be ramped up to extract more than 1 million tonnes of coal a year is seen as simply another extension to prolong the life of the Stockton mine.

Following an environmental court hearing in February next year, almost certain to be ruled in favour of the state owned enterprise, Solid Energy could well start digging as early as 2005.

While the campaign is centred around saving Happy Valley, it is also bringing in wider issues, particularly environmental matters like energy conservation, climate change, the imminent ecological crisis, as well as social and economic concerns.

This campaign has the potential to transcend single-issue politics and bring in a much more holistic critique of the current (dis)order, even to the extent of sowing the seed for a radical anti-capitalist ecological movement.

Cyprus Mine

Coal production in New Zealand has risen sharply in the last few years from 3.5 million tonnes in 1999 to over 5 million tonnes in 2003. Naturally, this growth is attributable to economic factors, particularly an increase in overseas steel production and the fact that other energy forms (such as oil) have, or soon will, reach peak production.

This means coal production is set to become steadily more profitable and it's no surprise that several new coal mines are in development around New Zealand.

The Cyprus mine is the probably the biggest of these proposed mines with its target output at just under half of the current total output for New Zealand.

Solid Energy plans to rip up two massive opencast pits in Happy Valley, covering 105 hectares and up to 95 metres in depth, with eventual plans to work its way down the entire Ngakawau coal seam. Opencast mining has become more and more prominent as new technology has developed and now more than 80% of New Zealand coal production is from opencast mines.

The new mine is expected to cost about \$16 million to develop and the financial returns for Solid Energy are to be substantial. Less than 30 new jobs will be created, the majority of these coming from outside the West Coast.

The Ecological Impact

The most devastating and fundamental impact the mine will have is the removal of the "overburden" – a mining term for the land above the coal deposit that has to be removed to extract the coal, and this includes the various ecosystems that just happen to be in the way. 182 hectares of Happy Valley's ecosystems, waterways and soil will simply cease to exist, or will, as farcical as it sounds, be trucked to other areas to be replanted. According to Solid Energy, a much more substantial area, 256 hectares in fact, will be "negatively impacted".

To play into the sentimental value of the area for just a moment, Happy Valley and the Ngakawau ecological district of which it is part of is home to the Great Spotted Kiwi, the endemic land snail *Powelliphanta "patrickensis"*, the Kaka, the Kakariki, the Western Weka and the Koura (fresh water crayfish).

It is also home to a large and thriving variety of less recognisable fauna associated with wetland and beech forest ecosystems.

The wetland is composed primarily of a large area of red tussockland at the base of the valley, while beech forest, shrubland and heathland are found on the valley sides.

It is these areas that will be removed entirely or seriously affected.

Acid mine drainage is another key factor in the destruction of this area. During the mining process the exposure of certain rocks to air allows for them to oxidise and when mixed with water (and Happy Valley gets plenty of this!) creates an acidic runoff.

While Solid Energy plans to put measures in place to reduce acid drainage, its previous record has largely just been token containment. The ecological impact of acid drainage will be spread much wider than just the area centred on the mining activities; run-off will enter waterways and affect ground water throughout the district.



Solid Energy's sparse "rehab area" at the Stockton mine.

There are various other on-site impacts including the introduction of pest species throughout the area and the spreading of coal fines (very small coal particles) into waterways, but there are significant global impacts too.

Solid Energy recently announced that it

would stop supplying coal for domestic use as it was creating high levels of air-pollution in New Zealand cities. This PR stunt (which was actually a smokescreen for a mining error) was a highly symbolic gesture that obscured the fact that the coal being dug up is going to be burnt elsewhere, significantly contributing to climate change and global warming.

The vast majority of the coal will be burnt despite claims to the contrary (the coal has specialist uses as a source of carbon in construction and as filters in gas masks). The release of carbon dioxide from the burning of this coal will only increase the rate of climate change already in effect that is set to push, according to a Greenpeace report, "over one million plants and animals, over a quarter of all life on land" into extinction in just decades.

The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is set to double by 2060 if we continue to burn fossil fuels even just at the current rate (and this is steadily increasing) which will cause a temperature increase of between 1.5 and 4 degrees Celsius. Just a one degree increase, according to a UN report, "may elicit rapid, unpredictable and non-linear responses that could lead to extensive ecosystem damage".

The Save Happy Valley Campaign

Earlier this year over Easter there was a week-long occupation in Happy Valley orientated towards attracting media attention to highlight the issue. It was successful and was reported on TV and in newspapers around the country. It came as somewhat of a shock to Solid Energy who didn't at that time appear to have a public relations strategy in place.

In between the initial campout and the most recent gathering on the West Coast, a series of discussions were organised throughout the country to further raise public awareness as well as delving into issues around energy use and conservation. Other public awareness activities have taken place too, with posters up around many central city areas, articles in various environmental magazines, information stalls and even a few symbolic actions.

The most recent campout was aimed at being less media-orientated and more concerned with discussing the future of the campaign, although a weeklong tree-sit and hunger strike did take place. Discussion about the future of the campaign, however, didn't really take place until the latter part of the week and as intensive as it was there wasn't enough time to come to any firm decisions.

Looking Forward

This campaign offers us some really positive opportunities. The most obvious being that we can save a massive area of wild land and habitat from being destroyed. The fact that this goal is so concrete and tangible and, in



Fiona Gibson and Rob Cadmus during the tree-sit.

my opinion, quite achievable is definitely something that attracts me after coming out of other campaigns like the anti-war effort. It also provides us with an issue around which we can vocalise some extremely serious and impending ecological issues/disasters. But beyond the immediate goals I think this campaign also offers an opportunity to build a radical anti-capitalist ecological movement.

Stopping this mine from going ahead certainly isn't going to be easy. With almost all the legal hurdles cleared by Solid Energy the only remaining 'democratic' channel remaining is lobbying and writing to MPs. Of course that path is a complete write-off – the various MPs concerned are fully aware of the issues, and telling them the same story over and over again is hardly going to make them reconsider their own agendas.

Public opinion is definitely something that could be easy to win, especially around an issue like this for a country whose international brand is based on a clean and green image (despite the reality), and this is a key opportunity to voice other environmental/political concerns too. But widespread disagreement, anger or concern over the proposed mine, even during an election year, is not likely to have much effect on government policy if the recent G.E. campaign is anything to go by, and this will certainly not create an outcry of the same scale.

Public opinion will not be the primary drive for stopping this mine, but it will be a necessary precursor. With public opinion strongly in favour of stopping the mine this will allow a direct action campaign to take place in such a way that will hopefully make it somewhat more difficult for the government to vilify the campaign or the protestors. An attempt to stop this mine using direct action of the magnitude required would certainly be difficult, but I see few other options and, besides, I think the normalisation of direct action in public discourse could be a big step forward.

I think the process of fighting this mine could function to politicise and radicalise those involved, as such a campaign can only help raise awareness of the economic and political motives that drive our 'democracy'. I think a concerted effort to get as many people involved is key to both stopping the mine and also to take advantage of this potentially politicising process.

The campaign structure allows room for a diversity of approaches and opinions. Many people will naturally get involved at the start with the more liberal/reformist types working under the Save Happy Valley umbrella, but as the campaign progresses and as we are all exposed to the different ideas present we could see the cultivation of a broader and much more radical politics.

Already there is widespread acknowledgement of the capitalist 'logic' that is pushing for the destruction of Happy Valley, as well as the division between those working on the mine who are going benefit and those who are going to come out just mostly covered in coal dust. In addition, there is a small but growing number of people disillusioned with the 'democratic' and legal means of change.

Those with more radical politics would do well to get involved, offering up answers and ideas of their own, attempting to highlight the more fundamental driving forces. Ideas such as deep ecology, which include many key anarchist themes such as a critique of power and the commodification of life, are likely to be well received.

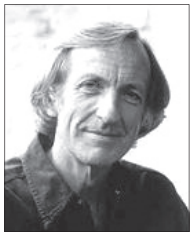
I think that the more radical should also seek to make links with other movements and people that are dealing with the same social forces that are propelling the destruction of the Earth. For example, the campaign has already received a really inspiring message from Te Runanga o Ngati Waewae that included sentiments such as this:

"With no more needed than the love of te whenua you have acted in accordance with your conscience and have highlighted the plight of our valued wild lands, threatened by the agents of the state and business as they meet the needs of their warped paradigm that has seen the earth buckle under the strain of massive expansion in consumption over the last few decades."

This is an awesome opportunity to start forging these sorts of links. This campaign is going to provide both the lessons and the space to share ideas that could build a movement(s) that could pose a real threat to the status quo. We have a very concrete and achievable goal, worthy in itself and yet also symbolic of the capitalist system of death and I think it is imperative that we make the most of this.

– Torrance

Time To Recognise State Terror



— John Pilger

THE WORLD is dividing into two hostile camps: Islam and “us.” That is the unerring message from Western governments, press, radio and television. For Islam, read terrorists. It is reminiscent of the cold war, when the world was divided between “Reds” and us, and even a strategy of annihilation was permissible in our defense. We now know, or we ought to know, that so much of that was a charade; released official files make clear the Soviet threat was for public consumption only.

Every day now, as during the cold war, a one-way moral mirror is held up to us as a true reflection of events. The new threat is given impetus with every terrorist outrage, be it at Beslan or Jakarta. Seen in the one-way mirror, our leaders make grievous mistakes, but their good intentions are not in question. Tony Blair’s “idealism” and “decency” are promoted by his accredited mainstream detractors, as the concocted Greek tragedy of his political demise opens on the media stage. Having taken part in the killing of as many as 37,000 Iraqi civilians, Blair’s distractions, not his victims, are news: from his arcane rivalry with treasurer Gordon Brown, his Tweedle-

dee, to his damascene conversion to the perils of global warming. On the atrocity at Beslan, Blair is allowed to say, without irony or challenge, that “this international terrorism will not prevail.” These are the same words spoken by Mussolini soon after he had bombed civilians in Abyssinia.

Heretics who look behind the one-way mirror and see the utter dishonesty of all this, who identify Blair and his collaborators as war criminals in the literal and legal sense and present evidence of his cynicism and immorality, are few; but they have wide support among the public, whose awareness has never been higher, in my experience. It is the British public’s passionate indifference, if not contempt for the political games of Blair/Brown and their courts and its accelerating interest in the way the world really is, that unnerves those with power.

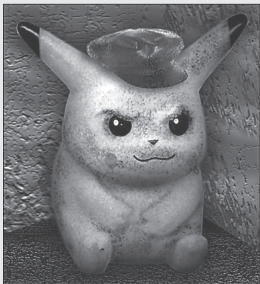
Let’s look at a few examples of the way the world is presented and the way it really is. The occupation of Iraq is presented as “a mess”: a blundering, incompetent American military up against Islamic fanatics. In truth, the occupation is a systematic, murderous assault on a civilian population by a corrupt American officer class, given license by its superiors in Washington. Last May, the US Marines used battle tanks and helicopter gunships to attack the slums of Fallujah. They admitted killing

600 people, a figure far greater than the total number of civilians killed by the “insurgents” during the past year. The generals were candid; this futile slaughter was an act of revenge for the killing of three American mercenaries. Sixty years earlier, the SS Das Reich division killed 600 French civilians at Oradour-sur-Glane as revenge for the kidnapping of a German officer by the resistance. Is there a difference?

These days, the Americans routinely fire missiles into Fallujah and other dense urban areas; they murder whole families. If the word terrorism has any modern application, it is this industrial state terrorism. The British have a different style. There are more than 40 known cases of Iraqis having died at the hands of British soldiers; just one soldier has been charged. In the current issue of the magazine *The Journalist*, Lee Gordon, a freelance reporter, wrote, “Working as a Brit in Iraq is hazardous, particularly in the south where our troops have a reputation (unreported at home) for brutality.” Neither is the growing disaffection among British troops reported at home. This is so worrying the Ministry of Defense that it has moved to placate the family of 17-year-old soldier David McBride by taking him off the AWOL list after he refused to fight in Iraq. Almost all the families of soldiers killed in Iraq have denounced the occupation

Leninist Critique of a Pokemon Episode

THE EPISODE in question deals with the protagonist Ash and his Pokemon companion Pikachu.



They discover a population of forest dwelling Pokemon called Shrewmish who are in danger of losing their habitat to property development. Ash, after understanding the plight of the Shrewmish meets with the property developers and is able to stop the development by appealing to the

developer’s personal feelings for the Shrewmish and so ends the drama.

This apparent resolution is a classic piece of social democrat propaganda, a dirty underhand trick that will only serve to prolong the misery of the oppressed and vulnerable Shrewmish. In the long term there can be no compromise with the forces of economic imperialism that threaten the Shrewmish.

It is apparent, even to the amateur theorist, that the condition of the Shrewmish is pregnant with revolutionary opportunity. Like all proletariat, the Shrewmish yearn to expropriate the

means of production and yet without proper class consciousness they will never realise their historic destiny. In order to radicalise the Shrewmish a resolute group of revolutionary Pokemon must commit themselves to action. As Lenin tells us, the majority is always stupid, and it is fatuous to expect them to be naturally aware of their revolutionary destiny. Only through the pressure of the enlightened minority comes the hard-won resolution to act, and this is how history is made.

That this simple logic is not perceived is entirely the fault of the petit-bourgeois cretinism of Ash and his weasel lackey Pikachu.

Ash, although superficially concerned with the circumstances of the Shrewmish, is mired in the fetid swamp of his own class chauvinism. The chief aim of his narrow existence is to enslave innocent Pokemon and use these poor wretches as proxies in his feudalistic duels with other similarly minded donkeys. Only the suffering and torment of these slaves can satisfy his depraved appetite for class recognition. Without his slaves, Ash is no more than a snotty brat with an ill-defined nose and two large blank eyes.

When the revolution does occur, as history says it must, then Ash will have to account to

the hundreds of maimed and tortured Pokemon thoughtlessly crushed in his imperialist power struggles.

But the bulk of our outrage should be reserved for the simpering sycophantic Pikachu, who in return for a few miserable crumbs of affection is prepared to betray his brother Shrewmish into a diabolical compromise that will only serve to further alienate the already desperate Shrewmish. Pikachu is a class traitor of the worst sort, sitting upon the shoulder of his bourgeois master, warming himself by the brutal glow of Ash’s horrendous vanity.

Pikachu is guilty of abusing his origins, of ignoring his moral and political responsibilities. He is a Trojan Pokemon, concealing the dark power of criminal wickedness beneath his yellow fur, drowning out the screams of tyranny with his squawking lies.

Such sneaking scoundrels are the enemies of progress, and will be dealt with in due course. All those who benefit from oppression will suffer the same fate as their corrupt masters.

Long live the Shrewmish Revolution!

— Nick Belton



and Blair, all of which is unprecedented.

Only by recognizing the terrorism of states is it possible to understand, and deal with, acts of terrorism by groups and individuals which, however horrific, are tiny by comparison. Moreover, their source is inevitably the official terrorism for which there is no media language. Thus, the State of Israel has been able to convince many outsiders that it is merely a victim of terrorism when, in fact, its own unrelenting, planned terrorism is the cause of the infamous retaliation by Palestinian suicide bombers. For all of Israel's perverse rage against the BBC – a successful form of intimidation – BBC reporters never report Israelis as terrorists: that term belongs exclusively to Palestinians imprisoned in their own land. It

is not surprising, as the recent Glasgow University study concluded, that many television viewers in Britain believe that the Palestinians are the invaders and occupiers.

On September 7, a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 16 Israelis in the town of Beer-sheba. Every television news report allowed the Israeli government spokesman to use this tragedy to justify the building of an apart-

heid wall – when the wall is pivotal to the causes of Palestinian violence. Almost every news report marked the end of a five-month period of “relative peace and calm” and “a lull in the violence.” During those five months of relative peace and calm, almost 400 Palestinians were killed, 71 of them in assassinations. During the lull in the violence, more than 73 Palestinian children were killed. A 13-year-old was murdered with a bullet through the heart, a 5-year-old was shot in her face as she walked arm in arm with her 2-year-old sister. The body of Mazen Majid, aged 14, was riddled with 18 Israeli bullets as he and his family fled their bulldozed home.

None of this was reported in Britain as terrorism. Most of it was not reported at all. After all, this was a period of peace and calm,

a lull in the violence. On May 19, Israeli tanks and helicopters fired on peaceful demonstrators, killing eight of them. This atrocity had a certain significance; the demonstration was part of a growing nonviolent Palestinian movement, which has seen peaceful protest gatherings, often with prayers, along the apartheid wall. The rise of this Gandhian movement is barely noted in the outside world.

The truth about Chechnya is similarly suppressed. On February 4, 2000, Russian aircraft attacked the Chechen village of Kattyr Yurt. They used “vacuum bombs,” which release petrol vapour and suck people's lungs out, and are banned under the Geneva Convention. The Russians bombed a convoy of survivors under a white flag. They murdered 363 men, women and children. It was one of countless, little-known acts of terrorism in Chechnya perpetrated by the Russian state, whose leader, Vladimir Putin, has the “complete solidarity” of Tony Blair.

“Few of us,” wrote the playwright Arthur Miller, “can easily surrender our belief that society must somehow make sense. The thought that the state has lost its mind and is punishing so many innocent people is intolerable. And so the evidence has to be internally denied.”

It is time we stopped denying it.

(From *The New Statesman*, September 17, 2004.)

What anarchism means to me...

A regular column for people who label themselves as anarchists to explore what anarchism means to them on a personal level, what attracted them to anarchism and what their plans and hopes are for the future.

I NEVER used to say I was an anarchist.

I didn't like to use the word anarchist, back when I spent more time around people living in the capitalist consumerist world.

I could see what the word meant to so many people, the vast majority of people in the capitalist world. And that is arrogance, Molotov cocktails and riots. The word invokes fear and antagonism where it need not, or in the wrong ways.

Molotov cocktails and riots certainly have their place in the struggle, but apart from some minor rioting maybe, it's so opposite from what my life as an anarchist has meant. Working non-hierarchically, listening, sharing and creating (OK fucking shit up too, but than can be a positive and creative experience).

So much of my life has been spent in committed caring hardworking anarchic environments, where the lines are blurred between working, living, activism, and lots of

really long meetings. However, saying I was working anarchically wasn't really describing this to people very well. There is so much prejudice against the term. So I felt maybe a new word could be found?

But since then as my life has become less and less intertwined with that strange consumerist Orwellian life they call normality, it's been so long since I had a regular kinda job or watched TV and I find my opinion shifting.

I have gained a sense of connection with the word, pride even. Maybe its because that's the label so many in my community chose to use and I am constantly proud and inspired by those around me. Maybe its learning a bit more about anarchists of the past and their struggles.

Maybe I'm just being sucked to the extreme, immersing myself so far in my 'brave new world' that I'm getting too removed from their reality. The further I get from their

world the less I want anything to do with it, apart from being a spanner in their works.

However, I do try to remember those feelings people have about the label, and my hesitation must still be there as I've told my mum I'm an activist and that I break the law, squat buildings, invade offices, eat from dumpsters, blockade roads, rip up crops... but I haven't told her I'm an anarchist!

But there was a question.. What does Anarchy mean to me?

Taking responsibility for your actions.

And... freedom, activism, meetings, consensus, cake, thinking of others, fantastically random things happening all the time, community, caring, love, strength, friendship, trust, solidarity, constantly pushing your boundaries and running around in fields being chased by helicopters.

– Soph

Ideological Cement for the Global Economic Order

– A Gramscian Analysis of the Third Way

THIS DISCUSSION on Third Way politics takes as self-evident the two primary functions of the modern state within capitalist society: (1) that it acts as the central body for administering the affairs and representing the interests of those groups who hold sway over the major means of economic production in society, and (2) apart from exceptional circumstances it functions to exclude, as far as possible, the masses from any form of political participation that may disturb this function. Following these principles it is possible to employ a conceptual framework derived from knowledge of the capitalist state's basic social role which allows us to plot a predictable pattern of action that it will undertake in order to maintain authority, address crises, and secure the public's ideal position of passivity.

If we can understand the basic logic the state will follow when faced with certain challenges and crises, usually taking the form of the public venturing too far into the realms of power and attempting to exert too great an influence on the economic and political forces which constitute their lived reality, it is also possible to go some way in predicting

“The Third Way was essentially an effort to deflect a challenge posed to the authority of global capital by seeking to humanise the neo-liberal agenda through a philosophically promiscuous marriage between the values of socialist humanism and the logic of neo-liberal market ideology.”

future paths of reaction the state may pursue in order to circumvent challenges to its legitimacy or interests. If we can expose and understand these basic patterns, we can also learn to subvert them. Here, of course, Antonio Gramsci will be eternally relevant.

At base, The Third Way was essentially an effort to deflect a challenge posed to the authority of global capital by seeking to humanise the neo-liberal agenda through a philosophically promiscuous marriage between the values of socialist humanism and the logic of neo-liberal market ideology. Third Way politics can be understood as an ideological

legitimation of neo-liberal monetarist policy during a period when populations who had long endured its socially destructive consequences demanded reform. These processes articulate well with Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and passive revolution, which will form the theoretical context for the remainder of this discussion on The Third Way as ideology. Firstly, a brief outline of terms is required.

The Gramsci Method

Hegemony refers to the processes whereby certain social groups maintain social authority through the manufacturing of ‘common sense’, that is, achieving a level of ideological dissemination that is so extensive they are able to frame all competing definitions within their own discourse, so that subordinate groups, while not necessarily controlled, act within an ideological framework that is essentially invisible. By securing a level of ideological saturation throughout all dimensions of social life the dominant discourse appears natural, “to lie outside history.”⁽¹⁾ Ideology is rendered inescapable and becomes a framework for making sense of the world, so that its very taken-for-grantedness makes it a completely lived relation.

A hegemonic order does not simply determine the content of ideas, but it does attempt to set the boundaries within which the ideas and conflicts of subordinate groups are articulated and resolved. When these boundaries are respected, hegemony is strong; when they are challenged or transgressed, there is a crisis of hegemony. In this way hegemony attempts to naturalise the prevailing structures of power, it serves as the foundation of their legitimacy. The burden falls on the critical analyst (ie. everyone) to pierce this taken-for-granted veil of normalised forms, to expose the set of rules and conventions that are at any time ‘given’ and ‘natural’ for all of society.

One such example of manufactured common sense is the widespread belief that the communist project has been proven bankrupt by the totalitarian versions of socialism witnessed in Russia, China, Korea and elsewhere, a form of state capitalism which is



today termed ‘really existing socialism’. On this account, history itself has proven the superiority of capitalist democracy over the socialist alternative, and all alternatives to the Western social model, anarchism included, are defined under this mantra of ‘really existing socialism’. When a discourse reaches this level of ideological ascendancy, we may define it as hegemonic.

A passive revolution is the path a state will usually follow when faced with what Gramsci termed an ‘organic crisis’: “immediate and fundamental political and economic problems requiring a reformation of state institutions and the dissemination of new ideologies, and characterised by incessant and persistent efforts which are made to conserve and defend the existing system.”⁽²⁾ The most

acute form of organic crisis is a crisis at the level of legitimacy, a revolutionary crisis.

This is a notion derived from conservative tradition going back to Burke who argued that society had to change in order to stay the same, that sometimes superficial institutional and ideological reorganisation is required in order to preserve the essential features of a status-quo. ⁽³⁾ The key point on passive revolutions is that while they are an attempt to recast hegemony, any required institutional or ideological modifications are usually made from above, through the agency of the state apparatuses, without relying on the active participation of the population.

Third Way as Ideological Cement for Neo-Liberal Hegemony

It should be stated plainly that the developments that prompted the emergence of Third Way politics cannot be described as an organic crisis in the fullest sense. Over the past 25 years the legitimacy of the democratic-capitalist social system has not been seriously threatened within hyper-industrialised western society, opposition to the effects of globalised capitalism have been adequately channelled into hegemonic structures (through elections, legislative reform, media propaganda etc), and radicalism has remained fragmented and weak.

Nevertheless, while the full implications of globalised capital are rarely grasped as a totality outside dissident circles, dissatisfaction with their effects are most keenly perceived on a domestic level within western society. This dissatisfaction manifested itself most forcefully in the political realm during the late 1990's in response to the dire social and economic consequences of the Thatcherite/Regenite neo-liberalist era. We witnessed a quite remarkably homogeneous shift to the left throughout the western world. After long periods in political exile parties traditionally situated on the centre-left of the political spectrum were voted back into office in New Zealand, America, Britain and Germany.

While this shift certainly did not signal a crisis at the level of legitimacy for democratic-capitalism, it did point to a growing disillusionment with the ability of neo-liberalism to provide a desirable form of human existence, many voters expecting, if not a U-turn, then at least a markedly different direction from a leftist administration.

In response, the governments of Schroeder, Blair, Clinton and Clark were faced with the uncomfortable dilemma of both being in popular ascendancy, while also having to reform, or be seen to reform the economic forces which provide the basis of state power. An ideological framework was required whereby centre-left parties could simultaneously claim that they were abandoning the socially destructive elements of neo-liberalism, while also engaging a consolidation process,

stabilising neo-liberalism's hegemony as the only viable economic system of the contemporary era. Thus the Third Way was born, "Thatcherism without the handbag"⁽⁴⁾, neo-liberalism infused with the values of socialist humanism, globalisation with a smiley-face.

The Third Way found its most prominent intellectual canon in bourgeois sociologist extraordinaire Lord Anthony Giddens. For those not familiar with the crystal palace of academic sociology, in a previous life, Giddens was renowned for his secondary writings on classical sociology, is highly distinguished, and can be generally credited with inventing Third Way politics. He is an adviser to Tony Blair, and has served as the primary source

"Third Way ideology relies on a process of naturalisation Here the policies of the 'Washington Consensus' ... consolidated at a domestic level through the machinations of state power are talked of like weather. Globalisation ceases to be a finely tuned process carried out by capital with specific ends and interests in sight, instead it stands for objectiveness of historical progress."

for the left-wing governments of the U.S, Germany and New Zealand in their attempts to intellectualise their new approach.

In his book, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Giddens employs the Hegelian method of dialectic, the resolution of an oppositional dualism by elaborating a third element which has the strengths of both but the weaknesses of neither. Giddens' triad is composed of what he terms 'old-style social democracy', which had excessive faith in the state, neo-liberalism, which has put equally misplaced trust in the unregulated market, and The Third Way, which transcends both old-left and old-right. Thus The Third Way was said to seek out the middle ground between the command economies of 'really existing socialism', and the socially destructive elements the Thatcherite free-market fetish.

In order to make this method work, Giddens is forced to make some rather astounding vulgarisations regarding socialism and social democracy, as well as ignore some rather rudimentary fundamentals of capitalist society, such as class and hierarchy. In this way the book stands as a lucid example of the hegemonic process whereby competing discourses are framed within the dominant discourse and thereby stripped of their oppositional content.

Today it is 'common sense' that really existing socialism was a failure. Giddens explicitly links the rise of The Third Way to the "death of socialism". ⁽⁵⁾ His account of what socialism actually is however, is hegemonic from top to bottom. Thus he writes, "The notion that capitalism can be humanised through socialist economic management gives socialism whatever hard edge it possesses." ⁽⁶⁾ Most of the left, from Stalin to Goldman, would agree that capitalism cannot be humanised, although they would of course disagree on the method and form of the replacement.

The alternatives from the leftist paradigm that The Third Way seeks to transcend should therefore be termed 'economic statism', what many of the most prominent contemporary leftist commentators such as Chomsky and Kagarlitsky would today flatly place on the extreme right. But Giddens is not this specific. Indeed, even Marx would have dismissed the expression 'state socialism' as an oxymoron, as he wrote in the 'Critique of the Gotha Program', "Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed on society into one completely subordinate to it". ⁽⁷⁾

No such concessions are granted in The Third Way however, alternatives to globalised capitalism are reduced to an amorphous blob that have already been consigned to the dustbin of history, a more sophisticated analysis of the leftist paradigm would be an elision of the prevailing hegemonic categories. Alternatives to state directed capitalism are ejected from ideological frame of reference, and therefore outside analysis. As Giddens states:

"In hindsight we can be fairly clear why the Soviet Union, far from surpassing the U.S, fell dramatically behind it, and why social democracy encountered its own crises. The economic theory of socialism was always inadequate, underestimating the capacity of capitalism to innovate, adapt and generate increasing productivity. Socialism also failed to grasp the significance of markets as informational devices, providing essential data for buyers and sellers. These inadequacies only became fully revealed with the intensifying process of globalisation and technological change from the early 1970's onwards." ⁽⁸⁾

And further:

"The left is defined by its concerns with the dangers of the market, whose excesses need constantly to be reigned back by the state. Today, however, this idea has become archaic. The left has to get used to markets, with the role of business in the creation of wealth, and the fact that private capital is essential for social investment." ⁽⁹⁾

This is a process of naturalisation that is cen-

tral to Third Way ideology. Here the policies of the 'Washington Consensus', enforced globally by the U.S treasury and the International Monetary Fund, and employed and consolidated at a domestic level through the machinations of state power are talked of like weather. Globalisation ceases to be a finely tuned process carried out by capital with specific ends and interests in sight, instead it stands for objectiveness of historical progress, left-Hegelianism rides! On this account, globalisation exposed the flaws inherent in socialism just as a rainy day exposes the cracks in a leaky roof. Here we may say Giddens's definition of socialism is the hegemonic definition.

So, while the spectre of Europe has been exorcised, its memory lives on as a set of values. As a political program, The Third Way implicitly accepts the two fundamental principles of the First-Way, that the primary objective of government is to facilitate economic growth, and that the best way to achieve this is through the free operation of private markets. The global neo-liberal economic order is a 'given', a Third Way government's role is to pilot its citizens through this new terrain.

In rhetoric, The Third Way should take a positive attitude to globalisation, while addressing its destructive effects. It should preserve social justice, while defending individual autonomy of action. It should reconstruct authority to involve active participatory democracy. And it should promote a modernising strategy that is based on the principle of ecological conservatism. ⁽¹⁰⁾

This approach takes as an unstated starting point the belief that the economic dislocation and social disintegration witnessed during the reign of Reagan and Thatcher can be addressed

without transcending the current system, that is, these contradictions can be articulated and resolved within the hegemonic apparatuses. In order to take this position, Third Way ideology is forced to restrict its critical analysis of capitalist society within very disciplined limits.

In contrast to traditional socialist and social democratic programs, The Third Way negates any discussion of classes, exploitation, the influence of the profit motive, the power of transnational corporations, the division of labour, the myth of free markets, the alienation of consumer society, and the viability of infinite growth on a planet with finite resources. Because Third Way policies must operate within the strict boundaries set by capitalist reproduction, in order to main-

tain ideological integrity it must banish these boundaries from the scope of discussion.

Giddens is quite explicit about The Third Way's desire to reject class and eschew any discussion on the power relationships that are the building blocks of capitalist society. His belief is that technology has so transformed the nature of capitalism today that historical notions of class have become redundant, and that the only existing option for the contemporary social democratic tradition is to facilitate the globalisation of capital and assist individuals to cope with the consequences through education, training and employment subsidies. ⁽¹¹⁾ As Kelsey writes, "The Third Way does not disturb any existing interests and has no enemies. Uncomfortable constructs such as class, colonisation, racism and patriarchy can be ejected from the political lexicon." ⁽¹²⁾

There Is No Alternative

This is all intertwined with an ethic that is central to Third Way ideology, and to the phenomena of globalisation in general: the ethos of inevitability. Neo-liberalism may not have succeeded in persuading everyone that markets are inherently good and state in-

upwards to a new economy. That's the challenge facing New Zealand and everyone else" ⁽¹⁴⁾

This is the hegemonic process of naturalisation, framing something within the dimensions of 'common-sense' and thereby abrogating alternate discourses. In order to secure acquiescence to the hegemony of global capital it is necessary to convince people of their relative powerlessness and the limitations imposed on the sovereignty of the nation-state, so that they are reduced to performing a technocratic role within very limited parameters. This image of the disempowered state helps depoliticise economic policy and obscure the state's active role in promoting globalisation, and indeed, its essential societal function as the representative of capital.

The point that the processes of globalisation have depended on state intervention has been made quite forcefully by Manuel Castells. As he argues, economic globalisation "was made possible, and, by and large induced, by deliberate government policies. The global economy was not created by markets, but by the interaction between markets and governments and international financial institutions acting on behalf of markets

– or of their notion of what markets should be." According to Castells, three state policies – deregulation, trade liberalisation and privatisation – "created the foundations for globalisation" and therefore "the global economy was politically constituted." ⁽¹⁵⁾

This is not to deny that over the past 25 years the scope for political action has been significantly reduced, the basic point here is that this is less indicative of the impact



tervention is inherently bad, but perhaps its most fundamental success has been its ability to construct an aura of inexorability around the globalisation process, the idea that once markets are opened up, governments, and therefore civil society are powerless to change them. As Giddens writes, the Third Way "refers to a framework of thinking and policy making that seeks to adapt social democracy to a world that has changed fundamentally over the past two or three decades." ⁽¹³⁾ And as Helen Clark pointed out in June 2000:

"You don't have a choice whether you ride the tiger of globalisation or not, but you can't ride it if your citizens are not educated, your infrastructures are not good enough, you're not using technology enough, and you haven't moved on

of globalisation than of the state following its essential logic and functionality within capitalist society. Even the briefest glance at the history of statecraft will reveal the fundamental constraints on governments to act in ways that conflict with the interests of capital – and most of the discussion on globalisation and the perceived death of democracy is vitiated by a disinclination to distinguish between the genuine effects of greater economic integration and the basic principles of action the state must follow within capitalist society *tout court*. The fact that the Blair regime is the first Labour government since 1924 not to face financial crisis is illuminating. In this way, as Callinicos writes, "adapting Lenin's maxim that 'the democratic republic is the ideal political shell of capitalism', we could

also say that The Third Way is the best ideological shell of neo-liberalism today.”⁽¹⁶⁾

Conclusion: Predictions on Praxis

So, in concluding it will be useful to return to an important proviso in Gramsci. A key point with the concept of hegemony is that the consent it aims to create and sustain is not simply a false consciousness in the Marxian sense, but is built on real albeit limited concessions and negotiations - it is more concerned with the incorporative deflection of opposition, rather than simply ushering it out of existence with ‘ruling class ideas’.

“In order to secure acquiescence to the hegemony of global capital it is necessary to convince people of their relative powerlessness and the limitations imposed on the sovereignty of the nation-state... This image of the disempowered state helps depoliticise economic policy and obscure the state’s active role in promoting globalisation, and indeed, its essential societal function as the representative of capital.”

Hence for a passive revolution to be successful, it depends on the flow of real resources within the hegemonic system, and they serve to encumber and deflect the development of a counter-hegemony. When a hegemonic power structure is faced with a crisis at the level of legitimacy, we would expect to see far reaching ideological modification and a substantial redistribution of resources, one such example demonstrated during the passive revolution carried out by the forth Labour Government in response to the increasingly militant assertion of Maori rights as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi.

While the wave of dissatisfaction Clinton, Blair and Clark rode into the realms of governance did not signal an organic crisis for democratic capitalism, but we may make the generalisation that this shift to the left indicated a desire for the mitigation of its harshest social effects, mitigation that if actually carried through would have caused serious disruption to the agendas of capital. Because this was not a crisis at the level of legitimacy however, extensive ideological reorganisation sufficed to counterbalance the lack of any tangible resource re-allocation.

In Britain, New-Labour was able to implement policies – privatisation schemes, social spending targets, relinquishment of

interest rate control to the Bank of England and palpably orgasmic enthusiasm for free trade – that a Tory government would have had immense difficulty selling to a public traumatised by the legacy of Thatcherism. Blair has also benefited from all the considerable achievements that Thatcherism secured for the business class, both in the restructuring of the economy as well as the humbling of organised labour, and his government inherited a socio-political context in which state hegemony was muscular. Nevertheless, some token institutional reorganisation was offered, packaged and sold in the form minor constitutional reform and some token democratisation.⁽¹⁷⁾ In America, where gross inequality and poverty are deeply embedded within the cultural psyche, resource re-allocation was for all accounts non-existent.

Surprisingly, in New Zealand, a country characterised by a conspicuous lack of popular dissent we saw perhaps the most substantial levels of resource re-allocation of any Third Way regime, probably more attributable to the energy and freshness of Helen Clark’s cabinet, as well as Clark’s personality than anything else. Social Policy initiatives included raising the minimum wage, ending the bulk funding of schools, establishing partly elected district health boards and some minor income redistribution. The economic fundamentals of Rogernomics radicalism have not been brought into question however, and despite the country’s excessive foreign debt, major deficit in the current account of balance payments, and an annual net deficit in foreign investment earnings, Labour’s two term reign has been marked by extremely light handed commercial regulation, a monetary policy focused solely on inflation, across the board trade and investment liberalisation and only tepid, inconsistent regulation of labour markets.⁽¹⁸⁾

While many leftist commentators have been content to dismiss the vacuousness of Third Way politics and ridicule the glaring contradiction that exists between rhetoric and policy, this attitude fails to recognise a state will reorganise itself only to the degree required to diffuse a threat that disrupts its normal functioning. The intellectualism of Third Way politics is flabby and simplistic for sure, but only because the legitimacy of the Western social model is at a level of hegemonic ascendancy that is quite historically unique. The status-quo can afford to be flabby.

Moreover, the emergence of The Third Way has inspired many leftists to talk in optimistic tones about a ‘crisis of western ideology’. Just as capitalist democracy has reached its apogee, precisely because of its marriage to international capital and the growing and luminous breach between ideal and practice, it is quickly exhausting all of its ideological possibilities.⁽¹⁹⁾ Indeed, this crisis may be

real, but underestimating the capacity of power to adapt and innovate has been a perennial weakness of the left. As stated above, power will only reorganise as much as it has to, and over the past ten years the opposition it has faced has been feeble, and its response reflects this.

When global capital is faced with a real organic crisis, whether this is brought about by ecological disaster, financial collapse, the development of an organised and truly global counter-hegemony, or the widespread recognition of the subversion of democracy at its most basic level, western states will be forced to engage a much more forceful passive revolution that aims to diffuse crisis and channel dissent back within the hegemonic apparatuses where they can be efficiently contained. We can expect a much more sophisticated recasting of liberal democratic ideology, a much more extensive re-allocation of resources, and much more pronounced institutional reorganisation, perhaps even movements towards the democratisation of the world economic bureaucracy, which has until now enjoyed almost total impunity from world public opinion.

“Just as capitalist democracy has reached its apogee, precisely because of its marriage to international capital and the growing and luminous breach between ideal and practice, it is quickly exhausting all of its ideological possibilities. Indeed, this crisis may be real, but underestimating the capacity of power to adapt and innovate has been a perennial weakness of the left.”

ion. We may also speculate that while this passive revolution will be significantly broader, it will display many of the same characteristics as the nascent one discussed in this essay. If we can understand and theorise on these patterns of hegemony, we can learn to encumber and subvert them. The autonomy project will be greatly strengthened.

– Matt Russell (Notes and references available at Aotearoa Anarchist Portal www.anarchism.org.nz/node/view/1202)

Inflation

the inequitable treadmill of capitalism

Angry about how badly the world is run? After reading our regular **Anarchonomics 101** column explaining the inner 'logic' of the capitalist economic system, you'll be flabbergasted that it runs as well as it does...

FOR MOST PEOPLE, politicians and economists included, economics is a strange and arcane world of hidden truths and mysterious symbols. Many activists treat the subject as they would radioactive waste, which is pretty daft when you think about it. It was the unfairness of the capitalist economic system that spawned anarchism in the first place so taking a moment to understand it pays a dividend quite different to the one our enemies get to pocket.

Getting to grips with capitalist economics is actually quite fun in a lunatic sort of way, like having a newly-arrived Martian explain human courtship rituals to you. (OK, I admit this hasn't actually happened to me. Not yet.) You know the Martian's talking crap, but there's a weird internal logic to it nonetheless.

So this issue we're having a look at inflation. Historically, inflation rates were the bugbear of Milton Friedmann and the Monetarist school of economic thought, these were the forerunners of today's neo-liberals – the free-market, privatise-everything-in-sight crowd. Inflation was blamed for all sorts of economic ills, leading to the present requirement that the reserve bank make low inflation a priority aim of economic management.

Inflation is supposedly a measure of the increase in the cost of living. The most common measure is the Consumers Price Index (CPI),

calculated by Statistics New Zealand. This is worked out by adding up the current price of a list of goods and services and reckoning how much it has increased since last year. Inflation can result from real increases in the cost of producing something – such as when a resource becomes scarcer and harder to access, or from purely arbitrary increases in costs, such as somebody deciding to put up prices to get higher profits or government decisions to raise prices or interest rates. Inflation can be a real problem for all sorts of people as it means money loses purchasing power. For the rich, with money in the bank or invested elsewhere, this generally means they lose out if investments or interest rates don't keep pace with inflation.

For most of us, inflation is chiefly important because it is taken to be a measure of how much your wages need to increase in order to maintain the same standard of living. Effectively, those of us on low wages have our income indexed to inflation. When you ask for an annual wage rise, you can expect the inflation rate to be the basis for fixing the amount of the increase.

The rich prefer not to have their pay related to increases in the cost of living. The top dogs in the private sector like to pretend they get paid what they are worth. Luckily for them, there is no way whatsoever to measure this as a company's profit depends on a lot more than the quality of the management – things such as dumb luck, conscientious workers, repression of trade unions, access to government subsidies and so forth all come in to play. High salaries tend to get higher more through fast-talking

and mutual back scratching than ability. Those working in lucrative government jobs claim their wages should be based on an equivalent job in the private sector, so things work out very nicely, thank you very much.

But back in the real world, if inflation is around two per cent, that's probably about what you'll get as a wage increase this year. The inflation rate is a measure of how much things cost, so if some things in the shops get cheaper, maybe because cheap Chinese imports have replaced locally made goods, you won't actually benefit because

this will keep the inflation down and your wages won't increase as much.

There are other problems. The CPI is calculated according to assumptions about what the average household spends its money on. For example, Statistics NZ considers that for the average household 0.05 per cent of its spending goes on tomato-based sauces. So if the price of tomato sauce goes up by half over a year, the CPI will go up by 0.025 per cent as a result. This 'weighting' is revised every few years to take into account changes in consumption, so if New Zealanders lose their fondness for Wattie's ketchup, the effect of price changes in tomato-based sauces will be lowered accordingly.

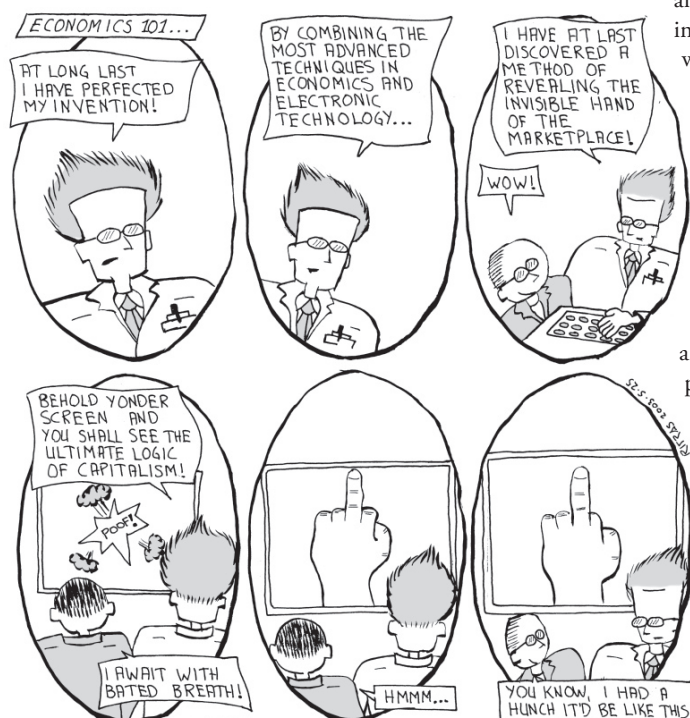
Clearly then, inflation is different for everybody. Tomato sauce is no big deal, but if you live in a place where rents increase faster than the national average, you may find your own cost of living is significantly outstripping inflation. If the proportion of your spending on a particular item, such as rent, is higher than the national average, increases in the price of that item will impact on you more than on other people.

Personally, as a long-time cappuccino crusader, I've benefited from the minimal increases in cheap restaurant meals over the last fifteen years – mainly thanks to new waves of migrants willing to work long hours for low wages in order to get established – but been hit hard by the higher than inflation increases in cinema prices over the same period.

If the price of something used at a similar rate by everyone increases, the effect will be felt more by those on lower incomes, as a larger proportion of their income is being used. For example, late last year the capitalist press reported a low quarterly rate of inflation. However, the report buried in the business section noted that this was largely due to falls in the cost of international airfares, whereas rates and electricity charges had risen substantially. Obviously, a drop in the price of overseas holidays and business trips is of little advantage to those on low incomes, while rates and electricity impact on everyone. So the calculation of the CPI according to an 'average' household's spending concealed a far greater hike in the living costs of the poor.

The lesson is not to trust statistics, and next time you request a wage rise, don't be fooled into thinking keeping up with inflation is good enough.

- Sam Buchanan





It's music not tinnitus

WELCOME. This column is a new feature for this 'zine in which the cultural and creative work cultivated within Aotearoa/NZ is given a chance to air itself. The output of people's efforts explored here will be the grist of work generally ignored by the mainstream cultural gate-keepers. There's a history here of exciting, explorative, experimental and self-defining creative work that is fitting of inclusion in discussions of an anarchist nature. When I say 'creative/cultural work' I use it as a general describer of any production of people's endeavour, via any medium such as poetry or paint or music.

Let me introduce myself. I started performing in punk bands in the late 80s in Invercargill. Moral Fibre was my first dalliance in the process of mixing politics with entertainment. The idea of finding a vehicle to explore a developing social and political consciousness in a format where I could make a hell of a racket at the same time was extremely liberating. I continue to play and perform, bouncing around musical and performance styles. For me the base line remains 'what social/ political relevance does this have?' My current creative outworking is, among other things, working with the chamber punk group 'mr sterile Assembly', and with the Red Mole theatre group 'Roadworks'. I have a large squishy spot in my heart for all things DIY and independent.

What I would like to talk about is my version of the story to date, and explore where independent music is at the moment in Aotearoa/NZ (A/NZ). The music I will focus on might not be anarchist in name but remains, nonetheless, self-determined in practice.

Due to our isolated location globally, a unique gaze has developed in our creative work, though the internet is changing that somewhat. The most well known example of independent production was the small label Flying Nun in the early 1980s, a few of people releasing a bunch of friends' albums for a number of years with no apparent concern for

the wider and fairly bland music environment at the time. It went downhill from there.

At that time, self-producing music was a relatively easy option. The difficulty lay in the recording rather than the production of the vinyl album. There was a liberal funding body, named QEII (Q E 2), which seemed to give out dollars for all sorts of ventures. A lot of diverse music was being released at the time, and it was within this context that the dual social conscience and the get-up-and-do-it-ness of punk thrived. There remains a significant quantity of early punk and punk inspired releases from that time such as Shoes This High, The Henchmen, Armatrak, No Idea, Compos Mentis, and the Mindfuckers.

This ability to create musical hard copies maintained momentum, and a strong culture of going out and seeing local bands play existed. But around 1987/88 everything had the proverbial guts kicked out of it. What changed?

It is discussed (and disgusting) that A/NZ is the perfect consumer test site, we have more EFT-POS machines than anywhere else, more fibre optic cable, and we had the introduction of an extreme neo-liberal agenda enforced on us before anywhere else. Overnight record shops were emptied of vinyl and the invasion of the CD had begun. Legend has it that in the wake of this new media invasion, the record pressing plant, great pieces of machinery, were summarily dumped into the harbour, effectively removing any possibility of competition for this new format from a healthy local music scene.

We were screwed, big time. I mean, who knew how to make a CD? At that point, who had CD players? Independent music pretty much died a death, small numbers of cassette releases continued, but all that energy had dissipated. It was bleak. The only kiwi bands releasing music in the new format were the god-awful Push Push, Freak Power, and a bunch of other North Island bands. South Island releases almost ceased. And at that time a contradiction in terms was born:

Alternative Music. We were swamped with Nirvana, Soundgarden, Nine Inch Nails and every other piece of corporate crap peddled as alternative to every other comparable piece of shite. We had lost the ability to reproduce our own voice unfettered by marketing and branding.

As time passed however, a few small labels were able to establish themselves. People were releasing on Geraldine acetate, a clear and inferior cousin to vinyl but still bloody cool in its own right. And even cooler, Peter King, the maker of these records, cut every one by hand, one at a time, at a reasonable cost. And this access to media reinvigorated local underground music. The DIY mantle had slipped from the once healthy punk domain and moved to the lo-fi, free-noise, ramble and roll type music makers. Self-funded releases with hand drawn, photocopied, or hand coloured covers were again being made for friends and other interested parties.

And then something else happened, the market presented its own Trojan horse, the burnable CD. And now, truly independent, self-determined, and exciting music is thundering away in bedrooms, and garages, and little venues. At this point, in my opinion, we live in an extremely vibrant period for sound makers, regardless of orientation. Whereas a few years ago, I could count on my hands the number of releases in a year, now I cannot keep up. And with that quantity comes a quality of focus and idea.

Let me add a disclaimer at this point and say that this is a very broad overview. Much acknowledgement and praise needs to be di-

"People were releasing on Geraldine acetate, a clear and inferior cousin to vinyl but still bloody cool in its own right. And even cooler, Peter King, the maker of these records, cut every one by hand ... this access to media reinvigorated local underground music."

rected to those who maintained independence in those difficult years. During that time Palmerston Nth seemed to be having a renaissance with Stomach being a reliable and regular venue and some active community members helping to release locally. The KKRRKK label developed its own industrial/ noise flavour, Solarphonic in CHCH released numerous Geraldine discs of their own brand of rock and roll. Corpus Hermeticum helped develop the 'first wave' of A/NZ 'free noise'. I don't have the space here to credit all the others but there is an interesting history project for the dedicated indy lover.

— Mr Sterile

GREEN PARTY AND NATIONAL FRONT ANNOUNCE NEW COALITION!

IN A MOVE that has stunned political commentators across the board, the Green Party and the National Front announced this month that they would form a coalition to run for the next election.

In a move to boost votes the two parties announced that they would run together in the upcoming election.

"We figured that we're both coming from very different angles and that by coming together we're appealing to the largest possible spectrum of perspectives. That's got to be good for us!" Rod Donald explained.

The coalition had obvious benefits too for Kyle Chapman's National Front party.

"We've been going round telling everyone that we'll have 500 members by next election so that we can run but in reality we've only got about 12 and most of them are too busy anyway smashing up the Freedom Shop or Jewish cemeteries."

"So joining with the Green Party has obvious benefits for us: we can graduate to being a legitimate political party and that means I get to be a real life politician!"

Whilst the two parties seemingly had very different political agendas, Rod Donald explained that the differences were really just superficial.

"Top of the list of my priorities is my career. Sure, I *used* to care about the environment and social issues. Heck, I even used to genuinely care so much that I called myself an anarchist! But those days are gone and now it's all about me, my career and political power."



Rod Donald learns a few lessons from Kyle Chapman on foreign policy and immigration.

"I mean, just a year ago our big vote-grabbing campaign was centred on the G.E. issue. But now that's old news, and we realised that if we ever wanted to get cosy with Labour we were going to have to drop it. If we could sell out on that issue, it's really not much different to start working with the National Front."

Similarly, National Front leader Kyle Chapman didn't see that their policies were really that different to get in the way of a stable relationship.

"Our political ideas are so incoherent anyway; we say we're anti-capitalists while at the same time we're bigoted right-wing nutters. If we can get away with that, is it really that much of a leap in logic to team up

with the Green Party?"

Throughout September the two party leaders were seen regularly having deep meaningful discussions and truly getting to know one another. Rod Donald believes that the coalition looks as though it's going to be a tremendous opportunity for all those involved, saying that they've set the foundation for a really solid relationship.

"Sure, he may be as ugly as hell and from certain angles looks like that dude off 'Family Guy', but deep, deep down I think he's a really nice and genuine guy."

Oh, and for those lawyers out there: this is purely fictitious and for entertainment purposes only (but the photo is real!).

Get Active!

Now you've read it, it's time to do something about it! Get in contact with a group near you and get in the loop. If you want your group or project listed here, get in contact with us.

Auckland

Aotearoa Black Press
P.O. Box 78-104
Grey Lynn
Auckland
aotearoablackpress@hush.ai

Animal Liberation Auckland
P.O. Box 7213
Wellesley St
Auckland
ala@blackcat.gen.nz

Wanganui

Marama-iti
784 Papaiti Rd
RD 14
Wanganui
saskiamarama@hotmail.com

Wellington

Aotearoa Reality Check
arc_contact@yahoo.com

Freedom Shop
272 Cuba St
P.O. Box 9263
Wellington
the_freedom_shop@yahoo.com

Wellington Anarcho-feminist Posse
meganthevegan@anarchism.org.nz

Dunedin

Black Star Books
24 Stafford St
P.O. Box 812
Dunedin
info@blackstar.dystopia.net.nz



Christchurch

Anarchist Round Table
P.O. Box 22-076
Christchurch
art@anarchism.org.nz
http://art.anarchism.org.nz

Christchurch Animal Action
P.O. Box 2250
Christchurch
caa@meatismurder.net

Internet

www.anarchism.org.nz